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Letter from the Editors

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Letter from the Editors

Deborah Middleton
Franc Chamberlain
Daniel Plá

Welcome to the first issue of *The Journal of Performance and Mindfulness*. The journal comes out of the Mindfulness and Performance Project, an activity of the Centre for Psychophysical Performance here at the University of Huddersfield.

During recent years, there has been a significant rise in interest in mindfulness, and in contemplative practices more broadly, in many parts of the Western world. We see this interest evidenced in the impact of mindfulness-based stress reduction on clinical practices; the Mind & Life dialogues between neuroscientists and contemplative practitioners, including HH the Dalai Lama; and the emergence of Contemplative Studies as a new multi-epistemological discipline. In the UK, we have even seen an All-Party Parliamentary report, making recommendations to government on the significance of mindfulness practices to areas such as healthcare and education.

Against this backdrop, and in the light of the extensive clinical research into mindfulness that is now available to us, one of our key aims is to investigate relationships between performance and mindfulness. We hope to encourage reflection on the many ways in which both historical and contemporary practitioners have drawn upon mindfulness from a range of traditional sources. We are interested in practices which explore 'mindfulness' as it is taught in Sufi, Christian, yogic, Buddhist, and other traditions; and in examinations of mindful awareness practices in the various lineages of performance training. We welcome reflection on definitions of 'mindfulness', and the extent to which mindfulness practices can be transplanted into secular performative contexts.

The four articles in this first issue present several examples of contemporary practice (including dance, design, directing and physical theatre) from three countries (Brazil, South Africa, and the US). Cassiano Sydow Quilici provides a close reading of the Pali term, *Sati*, from which the translation 'mindfulness' is generally derived, in his wider exploration of 'contemplation' in the performing arts. A lay practitioner of Theravada Buddhism, Sydow's practical research in Brazil also draws on Noh Theatre. Candice Salyers reflects on mindfulness practices for performer and spectator in her dance piece, *Six Reasons Why My Dance Card Isn't Full*. Salyers' contemplative dance arises from her practice in the Sufi Shaduliyya tradition. Anton Krueger presents three thoughtful interviews with South African artists: a director and a designer whose mindfulness practices originate in the Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, and in the teachings of Rob Nairn; and a physical theatre performer with experience in Vipassana meditation. Krueger's conversation draws out key themes in the ways in which these artists involve mindfulness in their work. Deborah Middleton's article reports on the University of Huddersfield's 2016 *International Symposium on Performance and Mindfulness*, and discusses the field of what she calls 'mindfulness-based performance'.

The editors would like to thank the many artists and academics who have already joined us in our discussion of performance and mindfulness at our symposia in Huddersfield (The Mindfulness Turn in Martial, Healing and Performing Arts, October 2016; Performance and Mindfulness International Symposium, June 2016; Psychophysical Performance as Mindfulness Practice, October 2013). We would also like to thank our editorial board for their advice and support as we developed this publication.

Issue Two of *The Journal of Performance and Mindfulness*, to be published in May 2018, is a Special Edition, focusing on practice and research being carried out in Brazil. We invite submissions for our third issue, to be published in November 2018. Please contact the editors if you wish to discuss a proposal. We also welcome any comments on the work of the journal. We can be contacted at: pameditors@hud.ac.uk

You can find more information about the Mindfulness and Performance Project on our website at (www.mindfulnessandperformance.co.uk).